SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

Saron's Mission: ***Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!***

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
bradley717@gmail.com

Ken Boyd, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

Joe Ulrey, Saron Congregational Council President
Cell: 313-718-2563
Email: josephulrey@yahoo.com

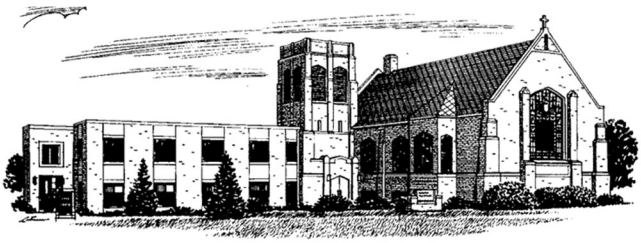
Typical Sunday at Saron:

Summer (began **May 26**):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

Fall, Winter and Spring (begins **Sept 8**):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40am Learning Hour for Ages 3-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia



PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR JULY 2024

"I don't know what the h*** you are talking about." Those were the words which made me think, "we haven't even started yet and I have failed." The comment came as I was leaving my car to help set up Saron's table at PrideFest, as sponsored by the OutCenter. I had greeted the individual walking by the park and was asked, "what's going on?" My answer that PrideFest was happening in a couple of hours wasn't sufficient. I then said we were there to show support for the LGBTQ community. That is when he commented he didn't know what I was talking about and walked away.

Now I can imagine the reasons for the man's comment, but this is not about him. It's about us, as the community of faith, and that words matter, that actions matter, that the ways we *joyfully share God's love for all* in word and deed matters. Sometimes they do not happen exactly how we hope them to, but we trust that God will use them in some small way for good. Sometimes we fail and yes, there is forgiveness. Sometimes it is simply showing up that matters most. And sometimes it is our words, our actions, our banners, our advocacy. I am grateful that Saron showed up at PrideFest and boldly proclaimed God's love for all – unconditionally. It is indeed, what Jesus was willing to go to hell for. That's how much he loves us; that's how much he loves us ALL.

- Pastor Joan

Pastor Joan & Jim are thrilled to announce the birth of their newest granddaughter, **Ella Kathryn Zimmons**. Ella was born to Erika & Paul on June 14, 2024. Welcome to the world, Ella!

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 9am-noon
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Ken Boyd (Bookkeeper):
Tuesday Mornings and by Appointment

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

7/2	Elijah Nicholas
7/2	Kathy Bergh
7/3	Harper Brown
7/4	Andrew Huff
7/7	Preston Akers
7/8	Elliot de la Foret
7/9	Barb Stelter
7/11	Emmett Gray-Roll
7/11	Thatcher Gray-Roll
7/12	Scott Gaspari
7/17	Terry Anserello
7/17	Aaron Becker
7/18	Becky Bucha
7/23	Lauren Kauffman
7/23	Mattias Streufert-Wold
7/24	Ken Kohs
7/25	John Koehler
7/25	Richard Osgood
7/26	Joan Oleson
7/28	Jennifer Nicholas
7/28	Sheila Hartlerode
7/29	Ilo Coar

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

7/3	Adam & Shavonn Bradley
7/7	Beth Gray-Roll & Marcus Roll
7/12	Judi & Rian Huff
7/14	Joseph & Katherine Ulrey
7/25	Linda & Brent Dipert
7/26	Kaitlin & Nicholas Hooper

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

CONGRATULATIONS

We welcomed **Calvin Howard Wallace** into God's family and Saron's congregation through the sacrament of Holy Baptism on June 23, 2024. Calvin is the son of John & Jane Wallace. Proud grandparents are Joe & Kate Ulrey. Sponsors are Tess Ulrey and Dale Boedecker.
Congratulations, Wallace family!

We are honored to announce the marriage of **Natalie Bolson & Spencer Troe**. The wedding took place on June 15, with Pastor Joan Oleson presiding. Natalie is the daughter of Fran Bolson.
Congratulations, Natalie & Spencer!

FORTIFY & fly

We are in the process of revisiting potential projects, available funds and a path to wrapping up. For example, Worship Enhancement has received extra tables, thanks to the craftsmanship of Dale Lucy, and is looking at updates to the sacristy (room for worship preparation/communion supplies). Facilities is addressing issues such as signage and converting one of the bathrooms to a family restroom to help with flexibility/accessibility needs.

We will continue to provide updates until all projects are complete and all the money has been responsibly spent. As always, thank you for being with us on this journey.

Worship

NEW: ASSISTED HEARING DEVICES

Our new sound system in the sanctuary came with headphones to help those having difficulty hearing the worship service. If this may be of benefit to you, ask Marcus if you can try one out.

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we now have Sensory Bags available for use during worship or at other times when helpful. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made confidentially online via a link in our Thursday mailings. You may include as much detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are also invited to be part of the Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes. If you want to know more about this ministry, please contact Pastor Joan.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Please note any occasion/thanksgiving to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks are payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Take them home to enjoy then **simply return the vase to Saron.**

Nursery

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

We are always looking for additional helpers to share the load. Contact Marilyn Lucy (269/759-3464) with questions or interest.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

July 7: 7th Sunday after Pentecost
Ezekiel 2:1-5
Psalm 123
2 Corinthians 12:2-10
Mark 6:1-13

July 14: 8th Sunday after Pentecost
Amos 7:7-15
Psalm 85:8-13
Ephesians 1:3-14
Mark 6:14-29

July 21: 9th Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 23:1-6
Psalm 23
Ephesians 2:11-22
Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

July 28: 10th Sunday after Pentecost
2 Kings 4:42-44
Psalm 145:10-18
Ephesians 3:14-21
John 6:1-21

YOUTH GROUP

This group typically meets once per month after the late service for food, fun and fellowship. Friends are always welcome! **Contact Scott at scottgaspari@outlook.com with any questions or to be added to the email list.**

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

It's finally here! Our group will leave on Monday, July 15, for the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans!

We sincerely appreciate the generous support we've received over the last six months. These four have raked leaves, helped with the Super Chili Bowl and returned cans/bottles. As of printing, Mia, Hunter, Alaina and Brooke had collected $3,147 towards their fundraising goal. The money collected will go towards trip expenses, purchasing batteries for emergency kits as per our assignment as Region 6 participants, and our cash offering at the closing worship. We ask that you keep our attendees and their leaders in your prayers. We want them to have a safe and meaningful trip, full of new friendships and once-in-a-lifetime experiences! They will share details about their trip when they return so we can all learn more about the theme: *Created to Be.*

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

We have many educational options to fit your needs and schedule. Always feel welcome to join us, at any time and for as many sessions as works for you.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

Our program year will begin again on September 8. We have opportunities for many ages and stages!

The Sunday Learning Hour (9:40am-10:30am) offers the following options:

- Preschool - Grade 5: Sunday School
- Grades 6-8: Confirmation Classes
- High School - Adult: Adult Forum

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We will continue to meet throughout the summer, outside in the parking lot, with a focus on the lessons of the week. **This group meets Thursday mornings at 9:30am.** Bring a chair and a Bible. We'll move inside as weather dictates. Contact Pastor Joan with any questions.

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

In June, we finished our 12-week study of *Mere Christianity* and would like to publicly thank David VanDenburgh for his great leadership. The book was thought-provoking and led to some great discussions!

For July and August, we will be doing week-to-week studies. The primary focus for each week will be the lessons and Gospel reading for the following Sunday, but we will try to mix in a relevant video or other current topic here and there. Hope you can join us!

We meet **Tuesday evenings at 6pm** in the upstairs lounge for one hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. **All are welcome!**

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

FORUM & fellowship

This group will take a break for the summer and begin again in September. We typically meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month. Everyone is welcome.
Contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 with any questions.

BOOK CLUB

We are taking a short summer break and will gather again in August. Here are the books we've chosen for the rest of 2024 and into 2025:

8/4/24: *The Housekeepers* by Alex Hay
9/8/24: *All the Broken Places* by John Boyne
10/6/24: *Firekeepers Daughter* by Angeline Boulley
11/3/24: *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks
12/1/24: *The World Played Chess* by Robert Dugona
2/2/25: *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* by I. Wilkerson.
3/2/25: *Iona Iverson's Rules for Commuting* by C. Pooley
4/6/25: *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krugger
5/4/25: *The Women* by Kristin Hannah

Join us in August! All who enjoy reading are welcome anytime, for one session or many. A good discussion is guaranteed.

Contact Kathy Cowall (269)428-0354
or kcowall@hotmail.com to receive email updates.

"Better to take a book and not have time to read, than have time to read and have no book."
-Crazy Book Lady

Women of the ELCA

SARON CHURCH WOMEN/DEBORAH CIRCLE

We will gather for dinner at **6pm on Wednesday, July 10 at Papa Vino's Restaurant in St Joseph**. Information will be sent by email. Responses to determine an accurate reservation number will be needed soon.

If you have any questions, contact Melanie at 269/449-8399.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for at least 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

THE BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN™
HEART-TO-HEART™

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy.
- Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On May 23, Saron members Doug Wold, Lindsay Gaspari, & Kathie Bradley were joined at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen by 3 of Lindsay's students from Brookview Montessori School. The students were a big help in preparing lunches for 98 guests. The mean included ham, potato salad, coleslaw, fruit, pickles, bread, & homemade cookies. Thanks to our cookie bakers Kathi Anserello & Mary Kynast.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering
(or those not-so-noisy bills)
on the first Sunday of each month.
These gifts are sent to
ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your continued support!

EYE GLASS COLLECTION

Do you have any old glasses sitting in a drawer? Lions Club has provided a collection box in the narthex. We have several members who are Lions that can deliver our glasses to the club where they will do more good. Thank you!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org
Lindsay Gaspari: 847/373-8826 or lindsay.gaspari@yahoo.com

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

The first step in getting involved, is getting informed. Register to receive their communications at https://swmichinterfaith.org/contact1

Support

The Support Committee typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Ed Brunner at ebrunner54@gmail.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

Other Bits of News

Saron primarily runs on volunteer power. Our dedicated congregation often keeps things running so smoothly, we don't realize what's happening behind the scenes. But there is a lot happening and we all need to share the load.

As we begin transitioning to a new pastor, it is vital to have volunteer spots filled and filled EARLY to avoid the stress of last-minute assignments. Please use the links in the weekly email to fill a reader, usher, or building closer spot for NEXT week, or ideally NEXT month, rather than waiting until right before to see if we have a need for Sunday. This would be a huge help. Thank you!!!

RETIREMENT OPEN HOUSE INVITATION

We'll never know the full extent of the difference she's made and the lives she's touched.
Join us in celebrating the retirement of
Pastor Joan Oleson
Saron Open House
Sunday, July 28, 2024
11am - 1pm
Heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be provided.

We will be in the dining room or outside, depending on the weather. Those willing/able may bring a dessert to share.

We need your help compiling a memory book! Handwritten notes, photos and well wishes can be left in the folder labeled "Amanda" outside the upstairs office door. You can also mail anything to Fran Bolson at 4124 Cottage Path, Stevensville, MI 49127 or email to fbolson@sbcglobal.net**.**

Living Water Ministries
Faith Formation, Service, Leadership, and Community

Did you know that our Synod has an awesome church camp???

Located on Stony Lake in New Era, Michigan, Living Water Ministries is a safe place for God's children to experience intentional community centered in Christ where they are formed in their faith, developed as leaders, and equipped as servants of the gospel. They offer a variety of summer programs for students completing grades 1 - 12 and specialty programs for those in foster care, adults with developmental disabilities, and high school students aspiring to be anti-racist leaders.

Learn more at ELCALivingWater.com

150 YEARS
ANNIVERSARY

In 2025, Saron will celebrate our 150th anniversary! This will be a big deal and a huge undertaking, with events throughout that whole year. The committee has been working on preliminary planning and has established an important date for your calendar.

- August 10, 2025 -

We will have a celebratory worship with Bishop Craig Satterlee at 10am, followed by a dinner at Union & Social, a beautiful venue in St. Joseph. More details to come in the future but keep this date open during your travel planning for next year!

We are planning to receive new members soon!
It's not too late to be included. Contact Pastor Joan.

Join us for

"God's work. Our hands."

Sunday, September 8
1pm – 3pm

We will again have two options for service projects – Readiness Center & The Boys & Girls Club. Lunch will be served after the 2nd service for those volunteering. Watch the weekly emails and bulletins for more information/sign-up.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We had great attendance on June 16 for the Q&A with Bishop Satterlee. My takeaway was that our congregation has a lot of positives that will help attract candidates but we need to be patient. A few other items of note from that meeting: interim pastors are no longer available so we will be working with supply pastors (we have one already lined up to get us started), the average vacancy is around 18 months (but it does vary considerably), and a typical call committee would be 6-8 people representing all the different facets of the church. The synod has developed a very complete document to help with the process. It can be found at the synod website - https://mittensynod.org/docs/CallProcessManual.pdf

Much of our June council meeting was spent confirming our pastoral transition plans and it looks like we are in good shape with a few loose ends that should be tied up before the July meeting.

As you are aware, Pastor's last service will be on Sunday, July 28 but the official last step in the process is an exit interview led by the synod with council attendance which will take place July 29 or 30. Council is planning to meet after that to form the call committee and get on with the process (see page 53 in the document above!). If you have an interest in being considered for a part in the call process, if you have not already done so, please let me or another council member know sometime in July.

Till next Month, Joe Ulrey, 2024 Saron Council President.

Bishop Satterlee Q&A on June 16

Note sent by Bishop Satterlee to the congregation: *Thank you for worship and conversation on Sunday. It was great fun to be with you. You are in our prayers as you bid farewell to Pastor Joan and begin the call process. Peace, Bishop Craig*

UPCOMING SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Be on the lookout for sales! Beginning in August, we will once again be collecting school supplies for Lybrook Elementary School in Eau Claire.

Suggested items: pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, notebooks, folders, tissues, disinfecting wipes, white board markers, and gift cards to Meijer and Walmart.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to
Bob & Mary Kynast
on their 60th wedding anniversary! Thank you for sharing your special milestone with your church family and for the delicious treat!

Additional picture from PrideFest 2024

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website:
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Coming to a Solar System Near You:

To Infinity & Beyond:
God's Love Has No Boundaries

Monday, August 5 – Thursday, August 8
6:30pm – 8pm

This fun and interactive Space themed VBS experience, targeted towards kids preschool through 5th grade, will include crafts, outdoor activites, lessons, music and more! Click on the link in the weekly email to register. For planning purposes, we'd like to know who is attending by **Sunday, July 28**. Walk-ins will still be warmly accepted.

JULY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 11am Prayer Group	**2** 6pm Bible Study	**3** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**4** **Happy Independence Day!**	**5**	**6**
7 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**8** 11am Prayer Group	**9** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**10** 9am Helping Hands 6pm Deborah Circle/Saron Church Women Dinner at Papa Vino's Restaurant	**11** 9:30am Bible Study	**12**	**13**
14 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour **Blessing for ELCA Youth Gathering**	**15** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting **ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans** →	**16** 6pm Bible Study	**17** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**18** 9:30am Bible Study	**19**	**20** **WEDDING**
21 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**22** 11am Prayer Group **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**23** 6pm Bible Study	**24** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**25** 9:30am Bible Study **SOUP KITCHEN DAY**	**26** **Unity Day at the Boys & Girls Club**	**27**
28 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour **11am-1pm Pastor Oleson Retirement Open House**	**29** 11am Prayer Group	**30** 6pm Bible Study	**31** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee **Pastor Joan Oleson's Last Day**			